

# Protecting Against Acquaintance Rape

Rape is one of the least reported crimes in our country. It is believed that less than five percent of rape cases are unreported. For those cases that are reported, a small percentage of the rapists are convicted. My research reveals that in the United States only six out of 1000 reported rape cases are the rapists incarcerated. I am not sure what are the statistics in The Bahamas, however this trend is universal.

On my website where there are about 850 articles I've written on social relationships ([www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org)), Google Analytics reveals that the most read article every day is the one on rape entitled: "My husband Raped Me." Digging deeper into where the readers of this article are coming from, I noticed that they are mostly from a state in India that has the highest incidence of rape in that country and one of the highest in the world—Maharashtra. Around the world, rape victims, in the privacy of their homes, are seeking help for their pain and confusion due to rape.

## KINDS OF RAPE

Broadly, there are three kinds of rape. They are acquaintance, date, and stranger rape. Unfortunately, acquaintance and date rape are the least reported. Acquaintance rape is committed by someone you know, or associate with, or related to. Equally as painful is date rape. Date rape occurs when a person is raped by someone he or she is romantically involved with and/or when out on a date.

My further study reveals four more descriptions of rape. I will present them with direct quotes from an article on rape by Cameron Ketcher and Jessica Fleming from the University of Arkansas:

1. "Anger rape--This type of rape expresses hatred towards the victim and rage. This type of rapist wants the person to feel and understand his anger towards them, even though they may have not been the one to provoke the rage they need to take it out on someone and make them suffer as he has for past wrongs and rejections."
2. "Power rape--This type of rape wants to express power and domination over the victim. These rapists have a common fantasy of women who want them and resist their come-ons and then consent to sex. When the fantasy is acted out and the victim doesn't cooperate the fantasy becomes more about the domination or taking control over that person. In this way, he is showing how very powerful, masculine, and sexually adequate he really is."
3. "Sadistic rape--This rapist is obsessed with the ritual that goes along with the sex. This could be making the victim act out a part in some sort of role-play, it could involve mutilation, or torture as a means of getting the rapist excited. These rapists are the ones that wake women out of a dead sleep, scared to death for their lives."
4. "Marital rape is committed by your spouse. It was once thought that once you consented to a marriage that you were obligated to serve your husband in any way he saw fit and this meant sexually." This is an erroneous belief that engenders abuse of all kinds, including sexual violence.

## PROTECTING YOURSELF

What can one do to protect against acquaintance rape? Here are seven tips to protect against acquaintance rape taken from Rape Treatment Center, Santa Monica Hospital Medical Center, California, that I have found to be helpful. I've added an additional one of my own at the end.

1. Know your sexual intentions and limits. You have the right to say "No" to any unwanted sexual contact. If you are uncertain about what you want, ask the man to respect your feelings.
2. Communicate your limits firmly and directly. If you say "No," make sure you say it like you mean it. Don't give mixed messages. Back up your words with a firm tone of voice and clear body language.
3. Don't rely on ESP to get your message across. Don't assume that your date will automatically know how you feel, or will eventually "get the message" without you having to tell him directly.

4. Remember that some guys think that drinking, dressing attractively, or agreeing to go out on a date are signs that you are willing to have sex. Be especially careful to clearly communicate your limits and intentions in such situations.
5. Listen to your gut feelings. If you feel uncomfortable, or think you may be at risk, leave the situation immediately and go to a safe place.
6. Don't be afraid to "make waves" if you feel threatened. If you are being pressured into sexual activity, don't hesitate to state your feelings and get out of the situation. Better to live through a few minutes of social awkwardness or embarrassment than to face the trauma of a sexual assault.
7. Attend large parties with friends you can trust. Agree that you'll "look out" for one another. Try to leave the party with a group, instead of leaving alone or with someone you don't know very well.
8. Here's my addition: Avoid being in secret or secluded places alone with your acquaintance. This may include and not limited to a hotel room, alone at home, a long drive to nowhere, a late-night walk on a lonely beach.

If this article has been helpful to you, would you kindly let me know by using one of my contacts below. I am Barrington H. Brennen, MA, NCP, BCCP, a marriage and family therapist and board certified clinical psychotherapist, USA. Send your questions or comments to [barringtonbrennen@gmail.com](mailto:barringtonbrennen@gmail.com) or write to P.O. Box CB-13019, Nassau, The Bahamas, or visit [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org) or call 242-327-1980 or 242-477-4002.